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"How long is that?" says I.
 "This time twelvemonth," says she.
 "And did you mind all your deadly sins since that?" says I.
 "Why wouldn't I?" says she; "sure they're not that many."
 "And how long did it take you?" says I.
 "Not the turn of my hand," says she; "for his reverence was in a hurry, and a deal of people waiting."
 "Maybe some was forgot in the hurry?" says I. "Tell me, Biddy, dear," says I, "isn't anger one of the seven deadly sins?"
 "It is," says she.
 "And did you tell him every time you were angry at me and the childer, for the last year?" says I.
 "How would I?" says she, "when the childer angers me every turn of the day, and it's forgot as soon as over," says she.
 "And was that confessing all your mortal sins for the year, Biddy?" says I.
 "And what can I do?" says she. "Sure, I can't go to confession every day in the year," says she.
 "Deed can you, Biddy," says I.
 "Is it nonsense you're talking?" says she; "where would I get time, or where would I get priests enough, or where would I get all the shillings?" says she. "Sure, it would take a man's wages," says she.
 "I'll show you the way, Biddy, dear," says I. "If we take to confessing our sins to God, sure, it's every night we will do that, Biddy; and we can tell them to Him while they're on our minds, and ask His pardon, and ask Him, too, to help us the next day; and won't that keep us watching ourselves? But when we leave it for once a-year to the priest, why, the sins are all forgot, and then they're not confessed at all, and then there's no absolution, nor nothing to keep us watching every day. That's the reason," says I, "that I would rather confess my sins to God, because it makes a better confession," says I.
 "And didn't Jesus Christ command us to confess our sins to the priest," says she; "and how will it be if we don't?"
 "Can you say the Ten Commandments of God, Biddy?" says I.
 "To be sure I can," says she; "aren't they in our catechism?"
 "Is confession among them?" says I.
 "No, then, it's not," says she.
 "And what commandments is it in?" says I.
 "It's in the commandments of the Church," says she; "sure enough, that's the way it is in the catechism."
 "Well, Biddy," says I, "isn't it all nonsense for them to be telling us that Jesus Christ commanded it himself, when their own catechisms allow that it is only a commandment of the Church? Sure, if He commanded it, wouldn't it be in the commandments of God?"
 "And who commanded it on us, then," says she, "if Jesus Christ did not?"
 "The priests *did*, and Jesus Christ *didn't*," says I. "Sure, that's just the meaning of it's being in the commandments of the Church, and not in the commandments of God."
 "Well," says she, "anyway, I'd never be easy in my mind, if I didn't go to confession once a-year."
 "Well, Biddy, dear," says I, "sure, I'll never say again your going, as long as it is in your mind to go. But, sure, Biddy, dear," says I, "it wouldn't do any harm, anyway, to confess your sins to God, too." So she allowed it wouldn't. "And now, Biddy, dear," says I, "wouldn't we just lay it down for ourselves to go, both of us, on our knees to God every night, and confess our sins for that day, and ask His pardon, and ask Him to help us against them for the next day; and, when Easter comes round again, you can go to the priest, if you like; and then you'll be the better judge, Biddy," says I, "whether confessing to the priest once a-year, or confessing to God every night, makes the best confession," says I. Well, so Biddy agreed to do that same, and we've both done it every night since. And, now, you would wonder to see how Biddy tries not to be angered at the children. And, 'deed, Jem, since I put Biddy on that, it's making myself mighty careful, too, about things I thought little of before. And, maybe, when Easter comes round, Biddy will think that confessing to God makes the best confession."
 "Well, 'deed, Pat," said Jem, "I think it's a good way you took, and the best way of all to learn what's best. Sure, it's a deal better than if you tried to stop Biddy going to the priest. And, 'deed, when a person tries that way, they'll find that it's not so easy to make a good confession to the priest once a-year. And, sure, if confession isn't done in reality, there's no good in absolution; and how can a man know, at the end of a year, if he made a good confession at all? and he getting, maybe, three minutes, more or less, to make it?"
 "Well, I think that's the great harm of it, Jem," said Pat; "the people goes to the priest once a-year, and maybe not that often, and just says a few words to him in a hurry, and then thinks it's done, and all right; and then never thinks more of it till next year; and it's just the greatest stopper at all to people confessing their

sins in real earnest. Sure, if a man goes to confess them to God every night, while he minds them himself and knows that God saw them, it will make him sore and sorry to have to tell the same sins every night, and make him pray the more for pardon and help, and make him strive more, too. But, when he goes once a-year to the priest, and gets clear of all in the turn of his hand, won't he just go on the same for the next year, and trust to get clean as easy. It's just like paying by Peter Barrowes,* so it is; and, sure, that never made a man honest or industrious."

"Well, 'deed, Pat," said Jem, "I thought that once myself, when I got to the sea near Drogheda, after I had the sickness, and I met Peter Reilly, the blacksmith, that is working in a great factory in Drogheda now; and he's the hardest working boy at all, and the dirtiest boy at all; for his face is as black as a sweep with the coal-dust, and his clothes that dirty with the coals and the grease they use in the factory, that you wouldn't like to touch them with the end of a stick. And Peter had just come out of the sea, washed for once in his life, and had just got the clothes on him when I came up. 'And isn't it the pity,' says I, 'to see you in the dirty clothes again, after the washing you got.' 'Well, then,' says he, 'I'm as easy in the clothes now, as if I had been confessing to the priest; sure, washing is like confessing,' says he; 'it lasts the year, anyway.'"

"Aye, that's too like what the people thinks that confesses to the priest, and then thinks themselves all right to go on again just the way they did before," said Pat; "but I'm trusting Biddy will think different afore Easter next."

And we trust that many of the Irish people may think different yet about confession of sins.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We are requested by Mr. Curry to put our friends again in mind that their subscriptions are payable in advance. We have already explained the difficulty of making special applications.

We have again to apologize to several of our contributors for postponing their communications.

To diminish the chance of disappointment, all letters should be forwarded to the office by the first day of the month.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st. Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber. Any one receiving any number of the journal, which has not been paid for or ordered by himself, will not be charged for it, and may assume that it has been paid for by a subscriber.

The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, APRIL, 1855.

IN a former number we gave our readers copious extracts from an article in the *Rambler*, a Roman Catholic journal and review, published monthly in London, strongly and justly commenting on the Rev. Dr. Cahill, and his "violent and contumelious" mode of conducting controversy, and judiciously observing, that "controversial discussion, to be useful, requires a sound head, a cool judgment, a disciplined temper, a prudent tongue, a contempt for clap-trap, and a desire to convince opponents, rather than to elicit the applause of indiscriminating admirers." Our attention has again been attracted by an article in the *Rambler*, contained in the number for the present month, headed "The True Principle of Religious Controversy," which contains many sentiments in which we heartily concur, and which, if generally acted on by controversialists, would not fail, we think, to promote the progress of truth and Christian charity in the world—

"Nothing can be worse," says the writer, "than to treat a sincere man, in invincible ignorance, as if he were a hypocrite, or a wilful unbeliever. 'Man is made to be led, and not to be driven.' If you do not treat an opponent as sincere and well principled, whatever you may think of him, your cleverest arguments may be thrown to the winds without further thought. The notion against which we are protesting arises from confounding two totally distinct things—the destruction of error, and the building up of truth. Prove a man the most stupid fool in the universe, or the blackest scoundrel that ever disgraced his species, and what have you done? Shown that he deserves contempt and punishment, and nothing more. You have not even begun to make him a wise man or a good Christian. The only method of reforming a criminal is to discover what good yet remains undestroyed in him;

to work patiently upon that foundation; and so, leading him from one step to another, to raise him in the end to the stature of an upright and worthy man."

"We can do no harm by treating a man as better than he is, provided only we never lead him to overlook the nature of his errors, and the enormity of the guilt of those who trifle with known truths. However little he may deserve our lenient judgment, at least he will be conciliated. He will not experience the most irritating of feelings—the sense that he is wronged; that he is not fairly met; that his motives are misinterpreted, and his difficulties not made allowance for. He will be tempted to take refuge in that most true, but often perverted maxim, that God is more merciful than man; or turn away from us as hard-hearted, rigorous judges, when he has been looking for consideration, gentleness, and patient love."

"It need hardly be added, that the principle of controversy here advocated is totally dissimilar from that which seeks to make Catholicism look like Protestantism in Protestant eyes. This latter system we think as fatal to the conversion of non-Catholics as the most bitter denunciation of every individual opponent as 'a heretic,' or the most caustic disparagement of every apparently good work of Protestants. In fact, the charitable treatment of Protestants, is really part of the very system which condemns the modification of Catholic doctrine or practice out of deference to their passion or prejudice. In both cases, we place our confidence in the ultimate power of truth and sincerity."

"It is obvious, however, that the principle of controversy here defended, does not apply in certain cases which too often come before us. It sometimes happens that the only weapons which we can employ are those of unsparing exposure and bitter satire. We have our foes, in whom not a trace of anything good appears, to which we may appeal in the hope of leading them on from good to better, for their own benefit, as well as our own protection. There are those who, in their present condition of mind, must be treated as adversaries, and nothing more. They are to be shown up, not for their own sake, but for the sake of others who stand by and watch the result."

"Still our controversies will always be more successful for a careful discrimination between a possible friend and an inveterate foe. And the surest way to convert a possible friend into an inveterate foe is, to treat him as if we regarded him, if not as a knave, yet certainly as a fool."

There is so much in the foregoing extracts completely in unison with our own sentiments, that we had well nigh hoped that we had, at last, found an opponent with whom we could have argued out all the points in controversy between the two Churches with perfect good temper, and some hope of a triumph to truth, on whichever side it is to be found. We regret, however, to add, that there are other passages in the same article scarcely, in our opinion, reconcilable with the charitable treatment of Protestants, the *prudence*, rather than the *Christian duty*, of which the writer has so strongly advocated. It is true that he says—

"We have no wish to show that all Protestants are worthless, hateful to God, and under his sentence of wrath. It is no part of our argument that every man who holds heretical opinions is himself a heretic."

Yet, in other passages he describes his Protestant opponent as—

"An opponent so vast, so pretending, so boastful, so laughably inconsistent, so illogical, so presumptuous, so lamentably ill informed, and so shameless, that it is hard to resist the inclination to give him his deserts."

And, again—

"The glaring inconsistencies, the illogical assumptions, the violations of history, the puzzled confusion of their minds, are studiously kept out of sight."

Surely the man who wrote these descriptions of his Protestant antagonists must have held them to be both knaves and fools—to use his own language, "deserving contempt and punishment, and nothing more;" or, at least, have forgotten his own judicious observations above referred to—"that controversy should be conducted with a cool judgment, a prudent tongue, a contempt for clap-trap, and a desire to convince opponents, rather than to elicit the applause of indiscriminating admirers."

We think we might safely challenge our readers to produce from our pages—from our first number (in January, 1852) to the present time—so sweeping a condemnation, or a sentence so severely uncharitable towards our Roman Catholic opponents as those we have last quoted, in an article, too, expressly written to point

* A saying in part of Ireland, for getting clear of a man's debts in the Insolvent Court, of which Mr. Barrowes was a judge.

out the folly of attempting to "overthrow English Protestantism by abusing Protestants."

Does the writer in the *Rambler* think it will conciliate Protestants, or tend to prejudice them in favour of what he calls "Catholic truth," to denounce the Thirty-nine Articles as "*vile*"—to speak of the "chaotic world of Protestantism"—of "Protestantism as essentially a religion of negations," in which it is *difficult to find two people who do not disagree in their creed*—of "that singular thing, English Protestantism . . . raising new churches, and paying additional elergy by hundreds and thousands, yet *winking at burial-club poisonings, wife-beatings, and child-murders*, and extolling the English people as the most moral on the face of the earth?"

Were we to have *conciliated* our Roman Catholic readers by similar vituperation, instead of calm argument and affectionate remonstrance, we rather think we should have long since been consigned to the oblivion we should have merited, and all our fine professions about candour and fair play would have been justly set down as mere snares to entrap the weak or unwary, instead of being considered, as we trust they are (even by our opponents), as the honest expressions of an earnest desire to follow truth wherever it leads, and of a sincere confidence that "the ultimate power of truth and sincerity" must, at last, prevail.

While, however, we protest against such harsh and uncharitable sentiments as unworthy of an article on "The True Principle of Religious Controversy," and utterly inconsistent with the sound views so ably urged in the paragraphs first cited, we are glad to be able to add some further extracts, couched in a more candid spirit. Speaking of English Protestants, the writer says, in another passage—

"They make sacrifices for religion—some of them great sacrifices. . . . They have wonderfully improved in general morals during the last half century; and that, not under the pressure or from the example of Catholicism (of which they know nothing), but from some influence residing among themselves."

Well, this we think is some set-off against the grievous charge of *winking at burial-club poisonings, wife-beatings, and child-murders*; and, probably, our readers will agree with us, is somewhat inconsistent with it. But if the *Rambler* expects to influence the minds of English or Irish Protestants by really doing what he professes, "placing his confidence in the ultimate power of truth and sincerity," we would recommend him to act up to his own wise principles, as we have endeavoured (we hope not wholly unsuccessfully) to do, and sincerely and steadily try to *lead* the minds of those who now sincerely differ with their Roman Catholic brethren (men whom the *Rambler* acknowledges cannot be *driven*) by fair reasoning, learned and logical argument, and truthful historical statements, based on adequate authority, into that glorious unity, which has been so eloquently described by the great Burke, as being not "unity of belief in the bond of ignorance, nor unity of profession in the bond of hypocrisy, but unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." In the words of the *Rambler* itself, we think there is, indeed, "an indescribable power, a victorious efficacy, in the very look, the voice, the gestures, and still more in the words of those rare persons in whom Christian *love* not only lives, but is absolutely dominant, which is unapproached by all the achievements of logic, and all the captivating beauty of human discourse. The reason we believe to be this—that the saint appeals to that which is good in a man, and treats him as being better, perhaps, than he is; while we, for the most part, attack that which is evil in him, and treat him as worse than he is, or, at the best, with the barest measure of rigid justice."

We shall forward our present number to the Editor of the *Rambler*, in the hope that the

good spirit in which the main part of the article we have referred to is written, will induce the conductors of that journal to try whether there are to be found in our pages any of the "illogical assumptions, the violations of history, or the puzzled confusion," which they would have their readers to believe are the characteristics of all writers who are opposed to them. Our pages have dealt with so large a number of topics as to afford ample ground for detecting and exposing such faults, if they exist; and not pretending to the supernatural powers of infallibility, we are not vain enough to suppose that we may not at times have fallen into involuntary error. One thing we are sure of, however, that we would not willingly either *remain in error* ourselves, or lead others into it, and shall, therefore, be truly glad to have any errors into which we may have fallen pointed out if they exist; and, with that view, we shall be happy if the Editor of the *Rambler* will permit us, not in a boastful or pretending, but a sincere spirit of Christian friendship, to present him with the whole of our periodical, Nos. 1 to 40 inclusive, if he likes to break a friendly lance with us in controversy, carried on in the Christian spirit we both profess to admire and approve of. We can assure the Editor that we have no party object in view, but are sincerely anxious to promote the cause of truth and virtue, and that we ever look upon those who differ with us, as *friends* and not as enemies, when they are trying to convert us to the opinions which they conscientiously believe to be true; and should the *Rambler* succeed in exposing inconsistencies, or illogical assumptions, in what we have presented to the world, he will, at least, not find us "*shameless*," but, on the contrary, *sensitively alive to character*, and anxious to repair any wrong we may have done, as all honest men ought to be, when venturing to write on subjects of such vast importance to the happiness and safety of the whole human race, as the boundaries between religious truth and error.

DISPENSATIONS BY THE POPE.

OUR attention has been called to this subject by the leading article in the *Tablet* newspaper of March 24. A proposal has been made in Parliament to allow a widower to marry the sister of his deceased wife. It is not the object of our paper to discuss such questions; but if we were bound to give a decided opinion, we should fully agree with the *Tablet* in condemning this proposal, and, perhaps, on stronger grounds. For, if God has made man and wife to be "one flesh" (Gen. ii. 24; and Matthew xix. 5; and Mark x. 8.), then we do not see how it can be lawful for a man to marry his wife's sister, any more than his own sister. We hope the proposed change will be rejected in Parliament; and even if it should be adopted, we hope the Irish people will never act on it. So far, therefore, we are quite agreed with the *Tablet* about it. And we are sorry to find that all Roman Catholics do not agree with the *Tablet* on this subject; for Mr. Bowyer, an English Roman Catholic lawyer, who is member for Dundalk, did actually support this proposal in Parliament: on which the *Tablet* observes, "English lawyers have never been famous for their respect for the Holy See."

But our present question is with the power of the Pope to grant dispensations to people to do what is wrong.

The law now restrains men from marrying their wives' sisters. Some people try to get up an outcry against that law. The *Tablet* condemns that outcry, and says, "it is a scandalous reflection on the discipline of the Church, which has ever maintained, with zealous vigilance, these unpleasant restrictions on human extravagance."

But, if this be so, how are we to understand what the *Tablet* says further—"We know well that these marriages are now unlawful, and that *nothing can make them innocent but the permission of the Pope*?" Now, if these marriages are guilty and sinful in themselves, can the Pope give men leave to incur guilt and sin? and does his permission make it innocent to commit sin?

But the *Tablet* goes on to say—"The dispensation is most difficult to obtain, *excepting only where sin is in question*." Now, what does this mean? Does it mean that the Pope gives leave to commit sin, only where people *will* sin, whether they get leave or not? That seems to be the meaning; for the *Tablet*, in speaking of the evidence which Cardinal Wiseman gave, concerning these dispensations, says—"His Eminence was speaking

of one class of dispensations, *which come from the penitentiary*, and which were made, in a sense, *necessary by the sins of the petitioners*. . . . Nothing was further from his thoughts, or more removed from his practice, than the issue of dispensations, by which persons of *blameless life and conversation* could marry the sisters of their departed wives." So it seems that to get a dispensation, a man must first commit sin, and then "the penitentiary" gives him a dispensation to continue in his sin; and that makes his sin innocent!

But, if this be so, why does not the Pope allow all his subjects to continue in sin, and make them innocent, just by giving them a license or dispensation? Should he not give fair play to all? Should not the rich and poor be on the same level in respect of sin, and of the Pope's care to free them from sin?

But the *Tablet* says this is not so. The *Tablet* says—"If the law were changed to-morrow, no English Catholic under the degree of a peer, could reasonably presume that his case could be *listened to*; and it passes our comprehension how any Christian can say that this is a *poor man's question*."

In that case it passes our comprehension, too, how "dispensation" can be a "*poor man's question*." But it is quite within our comprehension, why dispensation is *not* a poor man's question. A dispensation from the Pope costs a large sum of money. So a poor man cannot get a dispensation to continue in sin with innocence, and a rich man can. The poor man, unless he gives up his sin, *must* go to the devil; but the rich man need only go to the Pope and be safe in his sin.

We leave it to our readers to consider, whether sin be no sin when the Pope gives license to live in sin? And, if this be so, whether the poor man should not have license to live in sin, as well as the rich man?

SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE POPE.

IN our last number we showed what differences exist in the Church of Rome about the *temporal* power of the Pope. Many of the greatest authorities of the Church of Rome have maintained that the temporal power of kings and princes is subject to the Pope, who has authority from God to command, and even to deprive them of their kingdoms. Many Popes have claimed and exercised this power; and none have since disclaimed it; but it still stands in the canon law, as part of the law of the Church of Rome, that it is "altogether necessary to salvation that every human creature should be subject to the Roman Pontiff."

On the other hand, Roman Catholic princes, as is natural, do generally resist and deny this doctrine; and we believe that most of the Roman Catholic laity at present do reject and deny it.

This involves serious questions. Either these Popes have falsely claimed to have a power from God, which God never gave them; or else a vast number of Roman Catholics have been, and now are, resisting a power which God has given to the Popes.

It is not our intention to pursue this point of the Pope's temporal supremacy any further at present; but if any of our Roman Catholic correspondents are disposed to discuss it, we are ready to supply them with materials in plenty.

But our present object is to ask, whether Roman Catholics are better agreed among themselves about the *spiritual* supremacy of the Pope.

Here, at least, we might expect to find Roman Catholics agreed; and yet it is far otherwise. For many ages past the Roman Catholic Church has contained in it two parties who hold opposite views about the Pope's spiritual supremacy; and these two parties continue to differ about it at this day.

One party thinks that the Pope is only the chief servant of the Church, and subject to the Church.

The other party thinks the Pope is lord and master of the Church, and that the Church is subject to him.

But it is better that we should give these two opposite views of the spiritual supremacy, from the writings of most eminent Roman Catholic divines, and not from our own. We, therefore, give the best and clearest statements we can find of the two different opinions.

We take the first statement from the learned Aeneas Sylvius.

MO. I. AENEAS SYLVIVS.

"It is the opinion of all those who are dead, if that ought to be called an *opinion*, which is fortified with sufficient authorities, that the Pope of Rome is subject to the universal Church; neither dare those who are living deny it. But they venture on this, to make a doubt among some, whether that should also be believed concerning a general council. For there are some, whether desirous of distinction, or that by flattery they expect rewards, who have begun to preach certain strange and *altogether new* doctrines, and are not afraid to exempt the Pope from the jurisdiction of the holy council; for ambition has blinded them, from whom not only this modern schism, but all schisms to this day, are found to have arisen. . . . They who are half ashamed to beg, do chiefly support this heresy of to-day, of whom one cries out, that the actions of those subject to him are to be judged by the Pope, but that the Roman Pontiff is reserved to the judgment of God alone. Another says, that no one shall judge the first See, because that neither by the emperor, nor by all